

Every parcel of land with its grade and type is mapped, a thoroughness in land classification which has not yet been approached in the United States. While the mapping is recent, the information was always available in the village records. Village owned lands are also a survival of this system, especially the forests in the north. Community owned property is much more modest in area in the south and confined to small parcels of forest or pre-war forest, school and public building sites, community ponds, and the like.

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Present Land Tenure and Land Classification

The present method of land holding based on Japanese law went into effect at the end of the old land allotment system. The head of the family registered all lands, previously held as shares, in his own name. Apparently in the last distribution before the abandonment of the old system, men and women over 52 years of age received their property for life with the right to pass it on to their children. At the beginning of the new system, also, the wild land was still publicly held, but further clearing and reclamation got under way, and the genya land also began to be divided up and became part of private holdings about ten years after the new land law went into effect.

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The new system of private ownership of land introduced buying and selling (baibai), tenancy (kosaku), and land speculation. There had been some tenancy under the old system apparently however it was on a village basis with one community renting from another. There has therefore been insufficient time to develop in Okinawa the widespread abuses associated with the Japanese land tenure system prior to the land reform of 1946.⁷

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In all the villages studied, individual ownership is the rule with some informal tenancy. Now an owner is not paid for the use of his land, the result of a Civil Administration measure to encourage maximum food production. Tenancy, as it was observed in the villages was usually an informal lending of the lands the use by a friend, relative, or neighbor of an unused plot.

The present system of land use and land tenure is a result of practices and customs developed under the old allotment system, combined with the introduced Japanese system of inheritance. The family system plus these two influences have brought about the modern customs of land inheritance, the distinctions in types of land, and the fragmentation and lack of contiguity in holdings.

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7 Based on conversations with villagers in Matsuda. Uyehara, Yukuo made the same point in accounting for the low percentage of tenancy and the high percentage of independent farmers in Okinawa-ken, Ryukyu Islands, Japan. Economic Geography 9 (1933), 395-405. Reference on 399.

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273 the greater part of the following day until the effects are worn off.⁴

There is tolerance of drinking and of behavior while under the influence of alcohol—with the exceptions to be discussed below. This nonchalance extends to children and young people. When an elder and highly respected friend or neighbor, perhaps their own grandfather, is drunk, they laugh indulgently at him, passing off his behavior as foolish because he is drunk.

[576] The custom of drink exchange (*kempai*) certainly does not keep drinking to a minimum. Drink exchange is perpetual at parties. A small cup of sake is offered to a friend. He drinks, gives the cup back to his friend who holds it while the other refills the cup. The exchange goes on again. Often three or four men are involved in this reciprocity.

[207] Drinking, like an aperitif or cocktail before a meal, is not common. Sake may be drunk with or after the meal. Often it is served along with tea. Throughout the evening the two may be drunk alternatively. In this case, the tea is served first. Unless there are special occasions, there is very little day time drinking.

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562 In this drinking, the Okinawan woman has no part. There are a few minor exceptions. But in all the villages these exceptions were older or very elderly women. The young wife or girl in rural Okinawan villages simply does not drink. Furthermore, she seems to have no desire to. Occasionally a woman in her late forties or early fifties takes a few sips. In the southern villages, an old woman may drink a small amount with a little added sugar at a celebration. In Matsuda, shortly before New Years it is customary to give a party at village expense to all people in the village over 70 years of age. On this occasion, both the old men and old women are liberally supplied with and liberally drink the sake.

[888] These distinctions in drinking between the sexes, in my opinion, are closely tied in with the responsibilities of men and women, as they have grown up historically under the family system. The distinctions certainly cannot be explained in terms of contemporary attitudes. If [154] drinking is an outlet for the tensions of the men, a way of relieving the boredom and monotony of every day life, how can one explain the

[578] There is little real violence or fighting, but there may be noisy quarrels and some shoving about. Some mild men become very quarrelsome. The only instance of violence I observed was the case of a young man about 25 who drank quite a lot, became angry with some girls in the Young Women's Association for not doing chores he thought they were responsible for. He slapped one severely. The following day he was very remorseful. His mother went to the girl's house and personally apologized for the boy's behavior.

ment in these arts, in my opinion, is not due to absence of feeling and talent, but to conditions unfavorable to the development of ability beyond the stage of extemporaneous entertainment or for simple practical ends.

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Activities of Old Age

In old age there is no distinct break with the activities experienced from childhood. Around the age of 55 a man or a woman is considered old. He or she has left the middle age, and henceforth may be called grandfather or grandmother.

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A man legally retires at sixty. But this is retirement from house headship not from active work. The retired father remains in the background but he is respected and consulted. Men and women in their fifties, sixties, and seventies work much more leisurely and sporadically at their tasks, if they can. In the eighties, if they are still able, they confine themselves to strolls throughout the village. There are afternoon naps. The old go to bed very early. But they do not, if physically able, lose contact with the life around them.

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This lack of retirement from active life, among the old, is most pronounced in agricultural villages because there are so many simple and easy chores to be done. In non-agricultural occupations, the opportunities for continuing work in old age are not so great. But there are compromises. In Minatogawa, the old men often repair the fishing nets, help take care of the boats, dry fish, and cut grasses. The old stonemason does light chipping and bevelling. The old women may gather rocks.

There is no formal legal retirement for a woman, unless she is the head of a house. One of the striking activities of old women is their frequent travelling on buses. They may be merely visiting a nearby village, or they may have a basket of fish, vegetables, eggs, or perhaps a chicken to sell. They add humor and gaiety to a bus journey. An old woman does not hesitate to tell a young person politely but authoritatively to give her a seat or to ask the passengers to make way for her. Old women make humorous comments, and talk freely to total strangers. Okinawans of all ages are courteous to the old and to women with children and readily give up their seats, even on a long bus journey.

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In these villages, one cannot fail to notice the good humor, the interest in life, and the honored place of the old. It is not uncommon for a young man or a young woman from another village, in leisure hours, to visit an old person: a grandparent, an uncle or an aunt, the midwife who attended at his birth, his "growing up" parent, or the elderly relative of one of his friends. These visits are not mere formalities, and they may sit talking an hour or two over tea. Old men and women

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● 888 alike take part in conversations, discussing such topics as the price of rice, fish, or the market for village products, and other current happenings in the village.

One of the most pleasing, one might even say touching, aspects of the life of the old is the mutual respect between the elderly and the young. A young man in his late teens or early twenties talks to a retired village elder with respect, but not exaggerated deference, nor does he hesitate to express his own opinion. The elder man or woman listens as if the opinion of the young were worth hearing and there is no condescension in his reply.

The reasons for these fine relationships, I am convinced, are that both the old and the young meet one another as active participants in the culture in which they both live. The old, whether in poverty or affluence, are not shoved aside or ignored as persons no longer directly concerned with the questions, even the decisions, of an active life.

Near the end of the lunar year, Matsuda gives a party (keirokai) for all persons over 70 years of age. In 1951, the party began in the middle afternoon and ended at dusk. In the early or speech making phase, the mayor, introduced by the village headman, congratulated the old people on attaining their age. The headman, bowing low before the elders, then thanked the mayor. The primary school principal told them how American old people were able to drive automobiles, basing his remarks on a Japanese magazine article, and needlessly told his elders how to live a long life. His audience was much amused at the talents of the American old people. The men and women sat separately. A few children accompanied the old ladies. This is also an occasion for giving children born during the year a little money. After the speeches, both the old men and women drank sake in liberal quantities. The dances of the old were done with grace and agility. This custom is followed in the Onshichan area and may be widespread in Okinawa, though the dates for the occasions may vary.

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as usual. It was an affair organized by the women leaders, which, though a little slow in starting, turned into a gay carousing for the older women, who were less inhibited than the younger ones and needed little encouragement to drink and dance. 562 575 [888] ●

The daily life of a woman is more monotonous than her husband's and she has less leisure and recreation. After a day of hard work, men sit down alone or in groups to spend the evening in relaxation with a bottle of sake. After a short time they show signs of pleasant intoxication and all burdens of life seem to disappear. Such recourse to care-free diversion is generally denied women. Instead, they are loaded down with household chores and care of infants and guests after a day of work in fields and forests. They spend their little free time exchanging news with other women or talking with other family members or visitors who assemble around the charcoal fire in the back room during winter evenings. Only women of advanced age feel free to join the men in drinking at home. 562 512 [273] [273] [888]

Men have greater sexual freedom. They are at liberty to have affairs with other women outside the village and on trips to the city may visit tea houses and afterwards enjoy the favors of a prostitute if their pocket books allow. 562 837

Status differences based on age are reflected in the social structure and clearly denoted in the kinship terms. There is a special term of reference and address for "first son" and "first daughter" and for "older brother" and "older sister." As mentioned, ideally the oldest son assumes responsibility for the household, for his parents, and for the ancestral tablets. Even if he leaves his parental home temporarily or permanently for the city, where economic prospects are better, he remains the nominal household head and sends money back to his family. Theoretically the oldest male may retain authority until death, although in practice most men retire from this position at the age of 61. Their retirement is made official by an entry in the population registry. They continue to live with their oldest son and act as advisors and critics. A man's loss of authority with age occurs around his late fifties and early sixties and is evidenced not only by his retirement but also by his loss of the right to vote in village meetings. Veneration for age itself therefore, does not exist. Actual behavior toward the grand-parental generation, all the members of which are addressed as "grandmother" or "grandfather" regardless of actual kinship, is warm, mildly playful, and indulgent. Disrespect, however, is absent. 561 554 593 887 561 554 [596] [576]

It is characteristic of the relationship between children and grandmothers that in addressing nonrelated old women, the suffix *-san*, which denotes respect, is most often dropped for the "grandmother" 603 601

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[857] Adult Responsibility For women responsibilities come early. Mothers give their daughters tasks while their sons play. At marriage a woman enters her husband's household and immediately assumes adult burdens that she may not put down until old age. As a grandmother she may still care for grandchildren while her husband has left most of his responsibilities to his sons. [887] She may acquire ritual responsibilities toward her husband's family which can only increase with time.

[857] For a man responsibilities come gradually. Childhood is a time for play---except for the future scholar, or in cases of extreme poverty. Youth is a time when responsibilities may be postponed---except where an oldest son has been orphaned. Even after marriage a young man, though he may have to work hard, is not expected to remain sober and stay home nights. The peak of a man's responsibility comes with full maturity, when he has sons himself and when his father is beginning to age. This peak may rise to greater heights than that of his wife and his labor may be harder and make greater demands on his strength and health. But again in old age he may put his burden down and he is expected to seek those pleasures that he can still enjoy.

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[797] Women's lives may be duller but they are generally longer. And in old age a woman has the compensation of greater freedom than she has ever had before. Old women often speak with a frankness that is embarrassing to young people of either sex. Old women are also the repositories of knowledge of the ancestors and of the supernatural and thus become greatly respected and influential. Both the religious functionaries (kaminchu) of the kinship group and the seeresses or mediums (yuta) consulted on numerous occasions are usually women. An old man, unless he is a scholar or a diviner (sanjinsoo) has less chance of attaining fame.

But old men, as well as old women, may become tyrants. One Yamada family consisted of an old couple and their three grandchildren, the oldest a boy of twenty. This boy was registered as the head of the family, while the old man, according to the register, had retired; but when the boy had the opportunity to make a little money, which he needed for clothes, the old man took it for tobacco. On the other hand he permitted the youths of the neighborhood to hold parties in his house---hoping, one suspects, to help consume the refreshments---something a middle-aged parent might not have tolerated.

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[888] Formal Recognition of Old Age A man may officially retire, that is, he may transfer house headship in the register to a son or grandson, but as I have just indicated this may not prevent him from actually holding the family purse strings. For the community formal recognition of old age comes with the celebration of "year days" (tushibii). These are held on the anniversaries of the "birth year" of an old person. A person's birth year is the year, in the cycle of twelve, in which he was born. Since the reckoning of age is a matter of counting the years during which one has lived, the year of birth counts as one and so when the cycle of twelve has passed once and the year is again the birth year, a person's years are thirteen. Each time a person's birth year recurs it marks a significant point in his life. These recurrences are celebrated not on the anniversary of the day of birth but on the first day of the cycle that corresponds to the year, after Lunar New Year's. Thus 1954 was

the Year of the Horse, and so all persons born during any year of the Horse--- 888
1942, 1930, etc.---celebrated their "year day" on the first Day of the Horse 529
of the new year. Although theoretically all year days are important, in
practice only those of old age are given much attention. These are the cele-
brations of the 61st, 73rd, 85th, and 97th years. The 88th and 90th may also
be celebrated. The celebration of the year day of an old person is a matter
of pride for the whole family; formal invitations are sent, and the guests
are served food and drink requiring considerable expense on the part of the
family.

Death After his death a person does not cease to be of any importance to 769
the family. On the contrary he takes on a new importance as a focal
point for ceremonies and perhaps for feelings of anxiety.

Death is attributed to both natural and supernatural causes¹ with 761
natural causes probably barely in the majority. But there is also the vague
notion that one's life span is predetermined.

Almost immediately after the death of a person, members of his family 756
usually consult a yuta to learn if there was any last request or information 763
that the deceased had wished to impart to his family. This might consist of
an explanation of his death, a confession of some early misdeed, or last in-
structions to his heirs. While I was working at Yamada an informant, an
energetic, thoroughly likeable old lady, died suddenly. I learned later that
her family immediately went to Yakema, some twelve miles away, a place famous
for its many yuta. There they consulted a yuta and asked if there had been
any message the old woman wanted to communicate. They were told that the old
woman had been destined to die a year before but because she was such a good
woman she had lived an extra year, during which she had accomplished every-
thing she had intended to do---there was nothing to reveal. The family was
relieved and comforted.

The Funeral Women may cry out immediately upon learning that a mem- 764
ber of the family has died. The body is laid in the second room of the house
and flexed so that it may be more easily put into the coffin. If the death
occurs in the morning the funeral may be held the afternoon of that day; if
later in the day, the next afternoon. Offerings are placed before the body
and when the funeral is not until the next day, relatives keep a wake over it.

The funeral itself consists of a ceremony at the home of the deceased,
a procession to the tomb, and the placing of the coffin in the tomb. These
steps may be more or less elaborate depending upon the means of the family.
However, the local unit, the 'han' or the chinju, takes responsibility for
some activities, making for uniformity. Member of the 'han' or chinju make
two paper tablets with the name of the deceased written on them and make a
large square wooden box for a coffin. On the afternoon of the funeral, the
body is put into the coffin and a tray containing one of the paper tablets,
offerings of fruit, and an incense burner is placed before it. If the de-
ceased has requested it, a Buddhist priest may be called from one of the lar-
ger towns, but many country people do not call a priest, and indeed may never

¹ See Chapter IX.